

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONTACT WITH FLOOD WATERS CONTAMINATED BY SEWAGE

Because flood waters can contain raw sewage or other unhealthy substances that can cause infections such as E. coli, Hepatitis A or Tetanus, every effort should be made to limit contact with flood water. Avoid swimming and boating in floodwaters, and do not allow children or pets to wade or play in floodwaters.

Seek first aid or medical treatment if you experience the following symptoms after spending time or working in a contaminated area: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, muscle aches, fever, abdominal cramps, skin rashes, dizziness, or fatigue. If skin is broken and has come into contact with contaminated material, contact your healthcare provider if you have not had a Tetanus vaccination within the recommended time frame.

EPA offers the following guidelines for those in contact with flood water:

- Wash your hands before drinking and eating;
- Wash frequently using soap -- especially disinfecting soap;
- Do not smoke;
- Limit direct contact with contaminated flood water;
- Pay attention to any cuts or open wounds and limit exposure to flood water;
- Pay attention to any unusual symptoms and report them to health care professionals;
- Keep vaccinations current.

General precautions to reduce illness from contaminated flood water include routine washing with soap, and not eating or drinking while in contact with flood water. These precautions can significantly help reduce potential exposure and illness. Anyone with open-wounds or pre-existing conditions should seek immediate consultation to prevent possible illness.

Notify local authorities or the DEM at 222-1360 during working hours at or 222-3070 after 4PM if you are aware of oil spills or other potential contamination of flood waters by chemicals.